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JOSEPH SMITH ON CELESTIAL MARRIAGE

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The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints makes the assertion that in no sermon, lecture or newspaper article, published during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, can a single statement of his be found in which he endorses the doctrine of a plurality of wives.

Having read the works of the church for over a quarter of a century, I confidently affirm that there is not a single word, in a single sermon, lecture, statement, newspaper or church publication printed during the lifetime of the prophet Joseph Smith wherever he, by word, has endorsed the doctrine of a plurality of wives; not a single statement; and there is no Salt Lake Mormon breathing who can produce one and prove its authenticity. Elder R. C. Evans in "Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage," p. 38.

As not one line in all the writings of Joseph Smith can be found advocating the doctrine of polygamy, is it fair to judge of him by what his enemies say of him? Elder W. J. Smith in "Joseph Smith; Who Was He?," p. 122.

In throwing out this bluff, the Josephites are practically safe for, so far as we have been able to learn, but one statement of Smith's which seems to favor polygamy was PUBLISHED before his death, though a number of other statements made by him and entered in his "Journal" have come down to us and have been published since. But, by this same argument, it can be proved that Young, Kimball and the Pratts did not advocate polygamy before his assassination or, for that matter, before 1852, as they too denied the doctrine and not a published statement of theirs made before the latter date can be found advocating it. Yet, from the charges of Smith's enemies and from the admissions of the Josephites themselves, we know that this practice was in existence at Nauvoo before 1844. The fact is that before Smith's death this doctrine was confined to the inner circle and was cautiously guarded that it might not come to the ears of the Gentiles.

But Joseph Smith did commit himself on the subject of plural marriage and did father the celebrated "Revelation on Celestial Marriage," said to have been received July 12, 1843. As proof of this, I submit the following facts and evidences.

On June 7, 1844, the first and only issue of the "Nauvoo Expositor" was published by Sylvester Emmaas, backed by the Laws, Fosters and other recusant Mormons. This paper contained the charge that the Smiths taught and practiced Spiritual-wifery and the affidavits (made May 4th preceding) of William and Jane Law and Austin Cowles were published to prove it. On June 8, Mayor Joseph Smith convened the city council and advised the same to take steps to abate the "Expositor" as a nuisance. This was accomplished on the 10th and the Laws fled to Burlington, Iowa. This rash, impolitic, un-American

and anarchistic act roused the Gentiles throughout the vicinity of Nauvoo and things began to look like war. To defend themselves in the eyes of the public, the Mormons published the proceedings of the council meeting referred to in an "Extra" of the "Nauvoo Neighbor," the secular Mormon paper of Nauvoo, for June 17, 1844. From this paper, I extract the following statements of Hyrum and Joseph Smith relative to the existence of a "Revelation on Celestial Marriage":

Councilor H. Smith * * * referred to the revelation read to the High Council of the Church, which has caused so much talk about a multiplicity of wives; that said revelation was in answer to a question concerning things which transpired in former days, and had no reference to the present time.

Councilor C. H. Smith proceeded to show the falsehood of Austin Cowles, in the EXPOSITOR, in relation to the revelation referred to, that it was in reference to former days, and not the present time, as related by Cowles. Mayor (Joseph) said he had never preached the revelation in private, as he had in public; had not taught it to the anointed in the Church in private, which statement many present confirmed, that on inquiring concerning the passage in the resurrection concerning "they neither marry nor are given in marriage", etc., he received for answer, "men in this life must marry in view of eternity, otherwise they must remain as angels" or be single in heaven, which was the amount of the revelation referred to"; and the Mayor spoke at considerable length in explanation of this principle.

The reader will notice that in these statements it is admitted that some sort of a revelation on plural or celestial wifery existed at Nauvoo and that this revelation was the cause of so much talk about a plurality of wives. He will also notice that Hyrum and Joseph contradict each other in stating its character, one saying that it referred to ancient times, the other to the resurrection. While he will still further notice that the sentiments as expressed by Joseph Smith are strictly in accord with those of the celebrated "Revelation on Celestial Marriage" as published by the Brighamite Church.

As the Josephites may try to evade the force of these extracts by saying that they are not the LITERAL language of Joseph Smith, but the GIST of the same and that, too, written down by Willard Richards who afterwards figured conspicuously as one of Brigham Young's counselors, I call the attention of the reader to the following facts:

(1)—These purported statements were published in a paper that was particularly friendly to the Smith regime.

(2)—They were published ten days before he was shot and several days before he left Nauvoo, so he had ample opportunity to correct any misstatement, which it would have been to his advantage to do if such had been made.

(3)—They come from the bona-fide report of the council meeting which Smith attended, which report was signed by George W. Harris, president pro tem., and was accompanied with a certificate of genuineness signed by Willard Richards, clerk.

(4)—Elder Willard Richards, the clerk, was a particular and warm friend of the prophet, risked his life to be with him in Carthage jail when he was shot and had been for years his private secretary and a member of the "Quorum" of Twelve Apostles.

(5)—These proceedings were accompanied, in the same paper, with a proclamation, written by Smith and setting forth the Mormon side of the trouble.

These facts put these extracts above question as being the very sentiments of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, expressed at the meeting of the city council of Nauvoo, June 8 and 10, 1844.

In his "Autobiography," or "Journal," as published in the "Millennial Star," we also find a number of entries which go to prove that Joseph Smith advocated the doctrine of celestial marriage. They are as follows:

Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the Priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory. "Millennial Star," Vol. 21, p. 108.

Gave instructions to try those persons who were preaching, teaching or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives; for according to the law, I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom this power and its keys are conferred; and I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time unless the Lord directs otherwise. Entry in Smith's "Autobiography" for October 5, 1843.

But here is the clincher:

Wednesday, 12th (July, 1843, C. A. S.). I received the following revelation in the presence of my brother Hyrum and Elder William Clayton:—
(Here follows the celebrated Revelation on Celestial Marriage.) Hyrum took the Revelation and read it to Emma. "Millennial Star," Vol. 21, pp. 715 and 731.

To evade the force of these damaging entries, the Josephites have invented the objection that this document was carried to Utah by the Brighamites and that it may have been changed to favor their doctrinal positions. But this objection is only made when the Brighamites, Gentiles or apostates bring up some damaging entry. Ordinarily, they quote from it without question. For

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proof of this, I cite the reader to their "Church History," Vols. I and II, in which between 200 and 300 pages are quoted verbatim and are credited to Joseph Smith with such expressions as "Joseph says," "Joseph writes," "We quote from Joseph Smith as follows," etc., etc. If this "Autobiography" is of UNQUESTIONABLE authority in other things, why is it not of UNQUESTIONABLE authority when it comes to prove that Joseph Smith advocated polygamy?

For a full discussion of this question, read Shook's "The True Origin of Mormon Polygamy", price 50 cents, for sale at the headquarters of the American Anti-Mormon Association, Grayson, Kentucky.

What C. A. Shook hands out in the above is supported by the very highest Mormon authority, viz.: David Whitmer, one of the "Three Witnesses" to the Book of Mormon.

He says:

The fact cannot be denied that the world (with very few exceptions outside of the Reorganized Church) believes firmly that Brother Joseph received the revelation, or that he taught and practiced polygamy near the close of his life in Nauvoo.

Listen. He was close to Joseph, was one of the charter members of the church, had opportunities of knowing things that no one since had, has or can have.

He says:

I now have as much evidence to believe that Brother Joseph received the revelation on polygamy and gave it to the church as I have to believe that such a man as George Washington ever lived. I never saw General Washington, but from reliable testimony I believe that he did live. (p. 38.)

Read this to a "Josephite" and note how it will spike all his vaporings about Brigham Young being the author of that vile document on polygamy.

"Whitmer's Address," from which we quote, has the above and much more of great value to a seeker of truth. It is out of print. We command a few copies and will, as long as the stock lasts, send a copy as a premium to every new subscriber to the S. of L.

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